

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3458

S E C R E T BEIRUT 8948

EXDIS

EO 11652: XGDS

TAGS: MASS LE US

SUBJ: GOL REQ FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE: 1973 FMS

REF: STATE 148979

1. I RAISED QUESTION OF GOL INTENTIONS RE FMS CREDIT
JUL 28 WITH FUAD NAFFA, WHO HAS JUST SWITCHED FROM
FINANCE MINISTER TO FOREIGN MINISTER.

2. NAFFA SAID ONE OF MAIN COMPLICATIONS IS FACT THAT
"MOST" OF 200 MILLION POUNDS AUTHORIZED BY PARLIAMENT
FOR DEFENSE EXPENDITURES HAVE ALREADY BEEN OBLIGATED.
PROBLEM FURTHER COMPLICATED BY FOCUS OF CURRENT PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATE IN CONNECTION WITH APPROVAL OF NEW GOVT. LEFTIST
SPOKESMEN, LED BY KAMAL JUMBLATT, URGING THAT GOL NOT REPEAT
NOT PURCHASE ADDITIONAL ARMS ARGUING THEY WILL NEVER
BE USED AGAINST ISRAEL, BUT ONLY AGAINST PALESTINIANS.
THIS RENDERS ALL ADDITIONAL ARMS PURCHASES SOMEWHAT
MORE DELICATE AT PRESENT MOMENT.

3. I EMPHASIZED DIFFICULTIES THIS UNCERTAINTY ABOUT GOL
SOURCE OF FINANCING CAUSES IN OUR NEGOTIATIONS ON SUBJ AND
CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE GOL NEEDS. I FURTHER NOTED THAT
FEDAYEEN ARMS BUILD-UP CONTINUES UNABATED WHILE GOL SEEMS
HAMSTRUNG BY TECHNICAL-POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES.

4. NAFFA READILY CONCEDED LATTER POINT AND ADDED THAT THERE
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IS WIDESPREAD EXPECTATION THERE WILL BE ANOTHER ROUND OF

HOSTILITIES IN SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER.

5. RECOGNIZING URGENCY OF PROBLEM, HE PROMISED CONSULT WITH DIRECTOR GENERAL OF FINANCE MINISTRY AND PROVIDE US CLARIFICATION SOONEST.

6. POL COUNS ALSO RAISED PROBLEM WITH DIRGEN OF PRESIDENCY, DIB, POINTING OUT APPARENT LACK OF COORDINATION WITHIN GOL OF FINANCING ARMS PURCHASES. (MINDEF CONTENTS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS CAN AUTHORIZE EXPENDITURE FMS FUNDS OVER AND ABOVE 200 MILLION FIGURE WITHOUT GOING TO ASSEMBLY. MINFIN HOLDS OPPOSITE VIEW.) DIB PROMISED ARRANGE MEETING THIS WEEK BETWEEN DEFENSE AND FINANCE MINISTRIES TO RESOLVE ISSUE.

7. TO RESPOND TO QUESTION IN PARA 2 REFTTEL, DAO JUL 30 OBTAINED FROM LEBANESE DEFENSE MINISTRY AUTHORITATIVE LIST OF PURCHASE COMMITMENTS MADE PURSUANT TO PARLIAMENTARY 200 MILLION POUND AUTHORIZATION. LIST, WHICH WE ACCEPT AS VALID, (SENT SEPTTEL) TOTALS APPROX 190 MILLION POUNDS LEAVING BALANCE OF ONLY 10 MILLION (OR ABOUT \$4.2 MILLION AT CURRENT EXHCNAGE RATE).

8. ACCORDINGLY, GOL MUST NOW FIGURE OUT HOW IT WILL FINANCE REMAINING EQUIPMENT WHICH IT STILL WISHES TO PURCHASE FROM US.

COMMENT: IN ADDITION TO LACK OF PROPER INTERNAL COORDINATION WITHIN GOL, PURCHASE PROBLEM HAS BEEN COMPOUNDED BY LEBANESE EXPECTATION, BASED ON VARIOUS STATEMENTS TO THEM OF GENERAL U.S. SUPPORT, THAT WE WOULD BE CONTRIBUTING OR LOANING MILITARY EQUIPMENT. DESPITE OUR CLARIFICATIONS THIS IMPOSSIBLE, THEY ARE ONLY NOW FACING UP TO HARSH REALITY THAT IF THEY WANT MORE EQUIPMENT FROM US THEY MUST PAY FOR IT AND MUST FIND A MEANS OF DOING SO OUTSIDE OF 200 MILLION POUND BUDGET PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED.
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